

Freedom Together

Together we can make a difference

MALLING CLOSE CHILDREN CENTRE FREEDOM PROGRAMME REPORT JULY 2014



Funded by the Central Collaboration of Children Centres- CROYDON

Collaboration of CASA Support Refuge providing: Co-Facilitator –Pauline Arnold

Volunteer from previous Freedom Group- Debra

Group Facilitator: Freedom Together- Lou Moultrie

Malling Close Children Centre Freedom Programme Group

Start date: 23/4/14

End date: 16/07/14

24- Women registered

14- Women attended the group

56- (approx) Number of children within the families who registered

10- Number of children who were offered crèche places

88- Individual sessions completed

All women were asked to complete a registration form for the Centre. Mums registered to use the crèche are encouraged to visit children Centres before the group starts in order to settle in children and to allay any fears and anxieties. Some women already use the Central Collaboration Children Centres. This is the fifth Programme the collaboration have funded and are mostly filling the groups with Referrals from their FEP teams and with local women using the service.

Malling Close children's centre was the set venue for the Freedom Programme. Posters are displayed in Woodside Infants and the all the Central Collaboration of Children Centre's. There is also a web site for the Freedom Programme where the facilitators' details are currently available. Information was also sent out by email to local services and professionals working with vulnerable adults and children to remind them we are open for referrals in this area.

Referrals have been received from a varied sources: FEP, Health Visitors, DV Helpline, CPN , Social Services, Refuge, Key workers, IDVA, Key workers and Solicitors. The process has become much more streamline and allowed women to be booked into groups with as little hanging around as possible. Freedom Together was able to confirm places on the group mostly within 48 hours. The Central Collaboration FEP is familiar with the referral process and the programme so were able to provide all the information to their referrals. All self referrals were contacted directly by the group facilitator.

Yet again the response has been remarkable the 24 places were the venues full capacity and shows the need for the groups in this area. Five ladies dipped into the group attending only 1 to 2 sessions however the remaining eight women attended on a regular basis and most attended the average of 10 out of the 12 sessions. It sometimes takes several attempts to join a group before they feel able to stay. One lady had been booked onto two other programmes but finally managed to continue through the whole programme, all the time receiving excellent support from her FEP worker. All of this group were no longer with their perpetrators, two of the women currently living in Refuge. This may have contributed to the excellent attendance.

41% of women who registered on the group were families with children on Child Protection- huge. It was extremely important that each session was made as welcoming, warm and unobtrusive. The set venue has been used several times for the Freedom Programme so in all areas of reception and crèche they are totally understanding of what the women face to get to their centre and provide an excellent friendly, safe environment for both women and children.. The venue was a great size and great for women who know the area. Free parking facilities are available and public transport stops are near however some women get confused when they get to the tram stop.

Collaboration Works: Freedom Together have now established strong links with local services collaborating with SV and DV services in Croydon. The Sanctuary Project/ CASA –Refuge/ RASASC/ NHS-Parenting/ Croydon Homestart/ NSPCC / Off the Record/ Family Lives and Encounter Freedom. All are involved with the continued support and education for Freedom Together client group.

Local Services From the very onset of the course all women were given information and support regarding safety and the potential danger for anyone in abusive relationship. A list of local and national support agency and emergency numbers were provided for every woman throughout the 12 week programme.

‘Freedom Together’ invited local services into some of the sessions with the sole purpose of giving the women vital information for support, counselling or how to go onto volunteer and train in the community. Services were invaluable as it encouraged women and families to use the support to recover and enable them look at their future aspirations. They received information on training, volunteering and education.

Local Agencies-100% of women felt more confident to use outside agencies for support and were pleased to have agencies come to them. Over a quarter of the group went onto use counselling services.

Women were given the opportunity to have a voice about local services they have used.

- I feel the **Police** have been great I have felt protected and that they really cared and they believe you.
- I wouldn't trust **CAFCAS** ever. Really bad experience with them writing a report which they made up in their head. Put words in my mouth that I didn't say. This also applied to my ex-partner
- Croydon **Police** have not been supportive. Police in general are clueless about DV and need to be more aware of the things people are experiencing from perpetrators. Anytime a DV call is processed a female officer should always be present.
- The services at the **Family Justice Centre** have been wonderful
- **Rape Crisis** have been Extremely supportive
- All staff at the **Family Justice Centre** are professional and helpful
- **Casa Support** Has also been helpful with one to one sessions. Making sure for your safety and welfare. Its a good Refuge to be in with lovely understanding staff.
- **Croydon Council** is not helpful about their housing moving and the manner of their staff interview parts as if you are lying and they never get back to you
- **Sanctuary Scheme** have been wonderful
- The services that I have been in contact with are **Refuge** and **Slam** as well as **Croydon Council Social Services**: Refuge were excellent they offered me a safe place at the time when I most needed it and were even going to help me move, but in the end I used my own resources to be re-housed. Slam were Okay but I did not find them as professional or as efficient as you would expect an NHS trust to be. Croydon Social Services were horrendous, the social worker was unprofessional and they used their power to make threats. In the end the service improved after I made a complaint

- Helped me: Freedom Programme, Family Justice Centre, Rasasc, DWP/Outreach, Social services, Schools

Evaluation forms

We asked 8 women who attended the last session:

Compared to before attending Freedom, how do you think the course affected you?

Results from end session	Much Worse	Worse	The Same	Better	Much Better
Personal safety?	0	0	1	4	3
Knowledge of domestic abuse?	0	0	0	1	7
Knowledge of local services?	0	0	0	2	6
Self-esteem & confidence?	0	0	0	3	5
Understanding of the effects on children?	0	0	0	3	5
Ability to 'spot' potentially abusive behaviour in you?	0	0	0	2	6
Ability to 'spot' potentially abusive behaviour in others?	0	0	0	1	7
Ability to deal with potentially abusive behaviour?	0	0	0	2	6

Emerging themes: Many women spoke of feeling that they had to prove they were responsible and good mothers. Some were feeling exhausted by the demands from their children's father-(perpetrators) often feeling they were being bullied through the system. They had high regard for many support services but also felt let down and unsafe by the professional who did not understand how threatening and exhausting abusers are, even when separated. The women in Refuge spoke about feeling safe and supported. There are specialist workers in Croydon that have been effectively supporting the women.

Availability of course – 100% of the ladies want to see the course available throughout the borough to survivors and professionals. Most women throughout the course wanted professionals to attend the Freedom Programme to gain a better understanding of the difficulties the women face and the games Dominators play.

Blame – 75% of women said they felt they were to blame for their situation before attending the group. After the course out of the 75%, three quarters changed their view and felt the abuser was responsible and a quarter felt they recognised that they were also responsible for the abusive behaviour in the relationship.

Children –100% of the mothers who had attendance felt the course had made them better parents and had positive impacts on their children's lives. 71% of mums said they could feel a change for the better 29% said they could feel a real positive change in their parenting. Half of the mums on the group had children on a Child Protection Plan.

Emotional aspects – 100% of women said they were positively affected by attending the course, 62.5% feeling really positive about their future and their choices. 37.5% said the course had been challenging however they were glad they continued and felt more able to look at their future.

Facilitators – 100% of women who attended the last session felt the facilitators were excellent.

Group Aspects – I felt this group struggled in the first few sessions with differences in characters and understanding but as the weeks went on and the women were able to hear each other the women became extremely supportive of one another. They recognised each other's struggles and I feel the women felt less judged and judgmental as women. Seven weeks into the programme the sexual abuse session affected the women's mood along with the domestic abuse film that was being shown on television 'Murdered by my boyfriend'. Many women became emotional and struggled with the subject. It highlighted their fears and anxieties about abusers violating and hurting them and brought to light how vulnerable they were from the abuse they had suffered. They all managed to continue with the course and many ladies exchanged numbers and planned to keep in contact.

Learning – 100% of ladies felt it has been a beneficial learning about abusive behaviour. Some clearly struggled when learning about the tactics of the Sexual Controller and over a quarter of the group disclosed they had been affected by childhood sexual abuse. 100% of the women would like to see this available, 87% in secondary schools, family planning centres.

Self Awareness – three quarters of the women in this group recognised signs of abuse in their own behaviour, 83% felt they were able to put positive steps in place to change. 100% of the women said they felt more confident to use outside agencies for support and would no longer see it as a weakness to ask for help or support.

Strength – 100% of the women referred to feeling more confident. Over 75% of the women have plans or have enrolled on courses and counselling services such as Encounter Freedom, NHS parenting and Rasasc. Many women have opted to volunteer and or go onto further education, which is amazing.

Results – Over the duration of the 12 weeks women were also attending various meetings, court cases and under additional pressures related to their perpetrators. Freedom Together directed some of these ladies to various local specialist support services. All of these ladies found the additional support valuable. All women have requested to become a volunteer with Freedom Together or CASA-Refuge.

Recommendation – 100% of women said they would recommend the Freedom Programme to a friend or family. All the women felt the programme should be available to their own children in schools.

Women's Suggestions:

- More promotion, education tailored for young men about healthy relationships
Changes for future groups
- Somehow make the group more available to as many girls. I don't know how but to get them on a course like this.
- More time and added to weeks to go deeper into it
- You must take this to where I am from the women need to know this. I want to take this to them-(Africa)

Improvements

- A clear guide of directions from the nearest tram stop to Malling Close Children Centre to make it less stressful for women travelling

As always the feedback has been overwhelming from women who have attended the Oasis group

Women's Feedback

What tools or skills will you take from this programme?

- ✓ Recognise a perpetrator
- ✓ An abusive relationship act or saying and keep myself and my kids safe

- ✓ Trust myself, have faith in me
- ✓ More in tun, armed and free
- ✓ Can discern diff between abuse and healthy relationship
- ✓ Take action against negative services-complain!
- ✓ PERPETRATOR ALERT!
- ✓ Self assurance knowing that I can recognise the warning signs
- ✓ Knowledge
- ✓ Listening and trusting myself
- ✓ Motives/ appearance/ actions to notice
- ✓ Recognising tactics
- ✓ Have more belief and energy to do something for myself

What would you like to dump in a bin since attending this course?

- The negative way I think about the way I look because of my ex
- Controlling men
- Don't give into negativity
- Aggression and swearing
- I don't listen to his opinion anymore, he cant manipulate me. No more self blame
- My perpetrator and my likeliness to be vulnerable to future perpetrators and tactics
- Saying this is my fault
- Disliking myself
- Aggression
- No self esteem idiots, selfish person
- Tosser..Cunt...Dickhead..Prick!!!
- I am not worthy to be loved, appreciated, valuable and worthless!

What have you kept in your heart from this course?

- ✓ I am stronger than I thought I was
- ✓ Always there for a cuddle x
- ✓ Am not the cause! I am beautiful
- ✓ (Drawn heart)-laughter, fab group
- ✓ Feeling not alone, help out there
- ✓ Being part of the group realising that not only you facing difficulties in relationships
- ✓ I HAVE A VOICE & VALUE
- ✓ Forgive myself, love myself, be kind to me
- ✓ That I deserve more and need to work for it
- ✓ Right and wrong
- ✓ Encouraging, hopeful, inspiring, eye opener , intense
- ✓ Self love first!

Your personal comments about the programme please be honest about what you have gained or felt about the course:

- Freedom programmes educational approach with direction toward other services is the most productive and useful form of healing I've been through over the last 14 years. You put me in touch with Rape Crisis which has given me the most optimism I've ever had of dealing with sexual abuse
- I personally think that the freedom Programme is helpful to realise that there are ladies like myself whom have been abused in the past and are trying to get help and get over abusive relationships. It is helping us to recognise the danger and give us insight on abusive tactics and behaviour..Thank you
- It has been very good getting a better insight into DV and following the course with people in similar experiences. Very Refreshing and great to get emotions out
- The Freedom programme has been helpful with so much information. Am so happy I came for the programme and would love to introduce so many African people that are currently going through the same thing
- I plan on going back to education and looking for courses. I would also like to volunteer
- I started the course a few courses ago and regrettably had to stop two classes on. I think the course is brilliant, informative and safe. I'm so glad I could continue this course as I have gained so much knowledge and confidence it's made me feel stronger as a person. The crèche facilities and staff have been brilliant and I have felt safe leaving my child there
- It has been really good and has given me a better understanding of relationships and behaviour, both acceptable and unacceptable
- I've got a lot more knowledge and insight into techniques used to manipulate and distract you from making choices and I feel empowered and have trust and confidence levels improved
- The course has been enlightening and extremely helpful. I have plans to finish my HND in Jan 2015. I am applying to do Encounter course and parenting classes. I want to start volunteering and giving back to DV and vulnerable families, whilst looking for part-time work.
- This should be rolled out to both men and women, I feel passionate about early intervention. Education is so important and not all get their self-value from home. If I had it, things would have been different. It has given me clarity and awareness that has been rather than confusion and self doubt. I still have away to go but after 10years of dealing with other organisations this has by far been the most effective. I feel I am finally on the right path to healing from so much trauma as now am in touch with org that are more specific to my needs as opposed to generic counselling
- The course has helped me realise that I have been subjected to a manipulator using tactics purely to control me...it was never love. Now I can confidently move on hoping to have the tools to never allow myself to be in such a situation again. Also it has helped me realise that some of the things I have suffered as a result are common affects of the dominators tactics and not necessarily my fault. I plan to attend the Encounter freedom course.
- I have gained so much on the programme. It has opened my eyes, mind, and thoughts towards Dominators. Jaw broken, head worked etc. I would have loved it to go further to schools, colleges, women's weeks, churches etc. So that women may know and know how to keep themselves safe.

- It's nice to know you're not the only one. I feel happier and confident. I joined half way through, iv missed 8 out of 12 sessions I still found it helpful and will return in September to complete the 12 weeks. (this lady found it extremely difficult to travel to the venue, fear of her perpetrator finding her)
- I will be using RASASC and Encounter Freedom to deal with my anxieties and trauma
- I think the freedom group is very helpful and useful. I think there are more positives than negatives. The only negative is re-living what happened, but has to be done
- Initially it was heavy emotional anger, frustration, upset. I do not feel it is a coincidence that me self esteem and ability to assert myself has increased. It has given me clarity in many areas.
- I have now become aware of a rape organisation which has given me a feeling of liberty and that finally I can get the help I've always needed.
- To me this educational approach is far more healing as opposed to peer to peer support groups of which I have been to many. The facilitators are fantastic and relatable and approachable and the name 'Freedom programme' is perfect as I have become my most free and look forward to my long term sustained freedom and liberation. Thanx!!! X x x

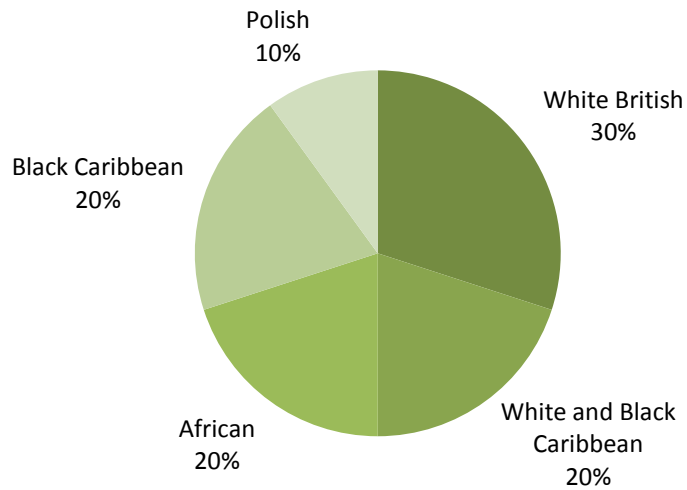
Continued: Client information gathered from completed diversity forms

All clients completed a diversity form on the first session they attend however the information may not always be accurate. Women disclosed throughout the 12 weeks significant harm and affects of domestic and sexual abuse.

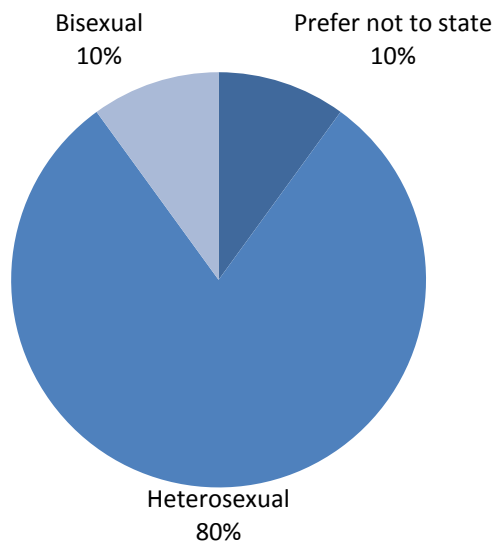
This is the nature of Domestic Abuse – **Hidden! We only know what people feel safe enough to tell us!**

Malling Close Group Freedom Together Diversity Monitoring Information

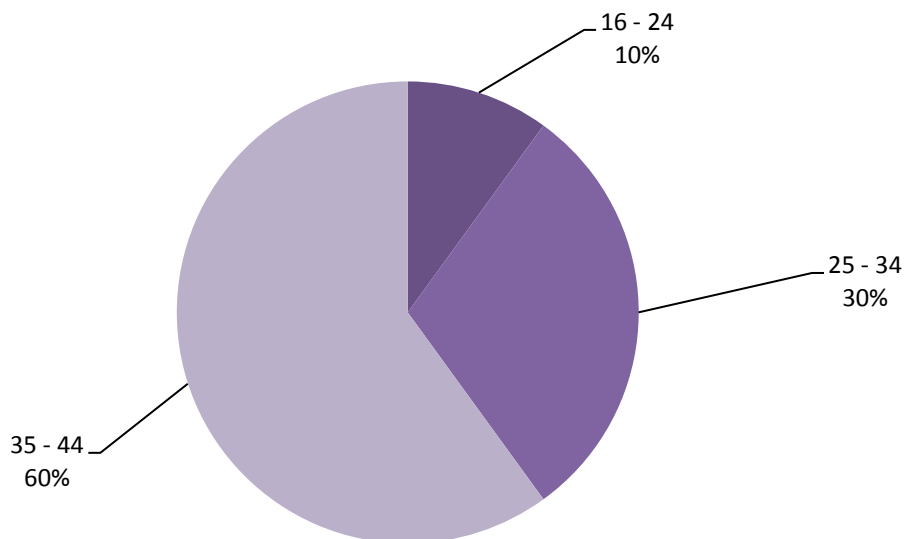
ETHNIC ORIGIN



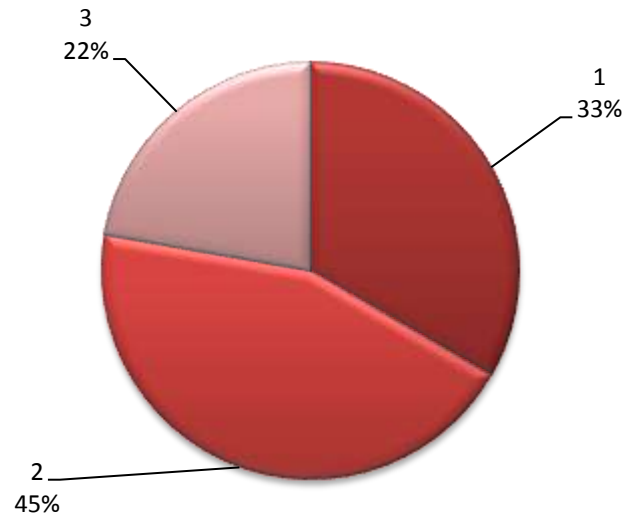
SEXUAL ORIENTATION



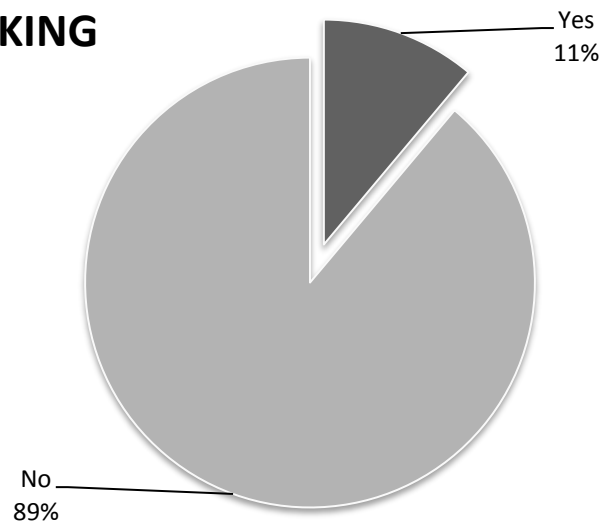
AGE



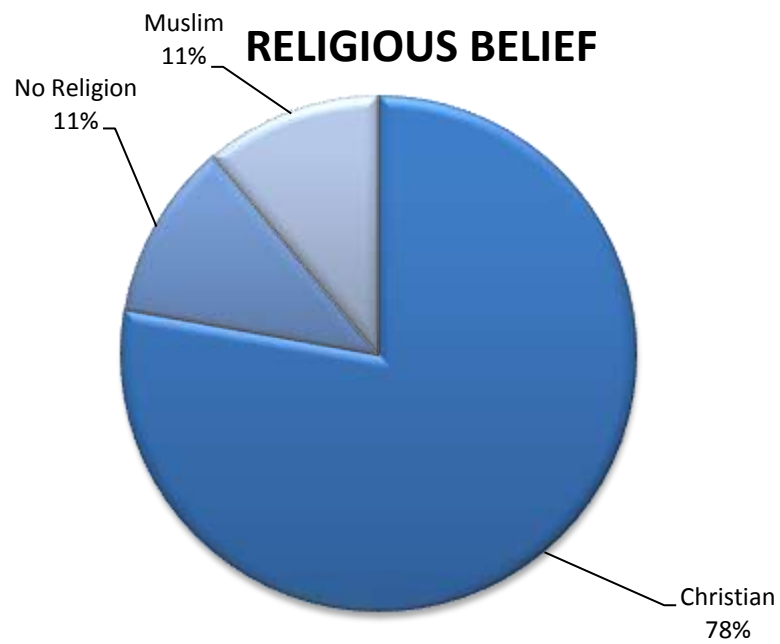
NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN EACH FAMILY



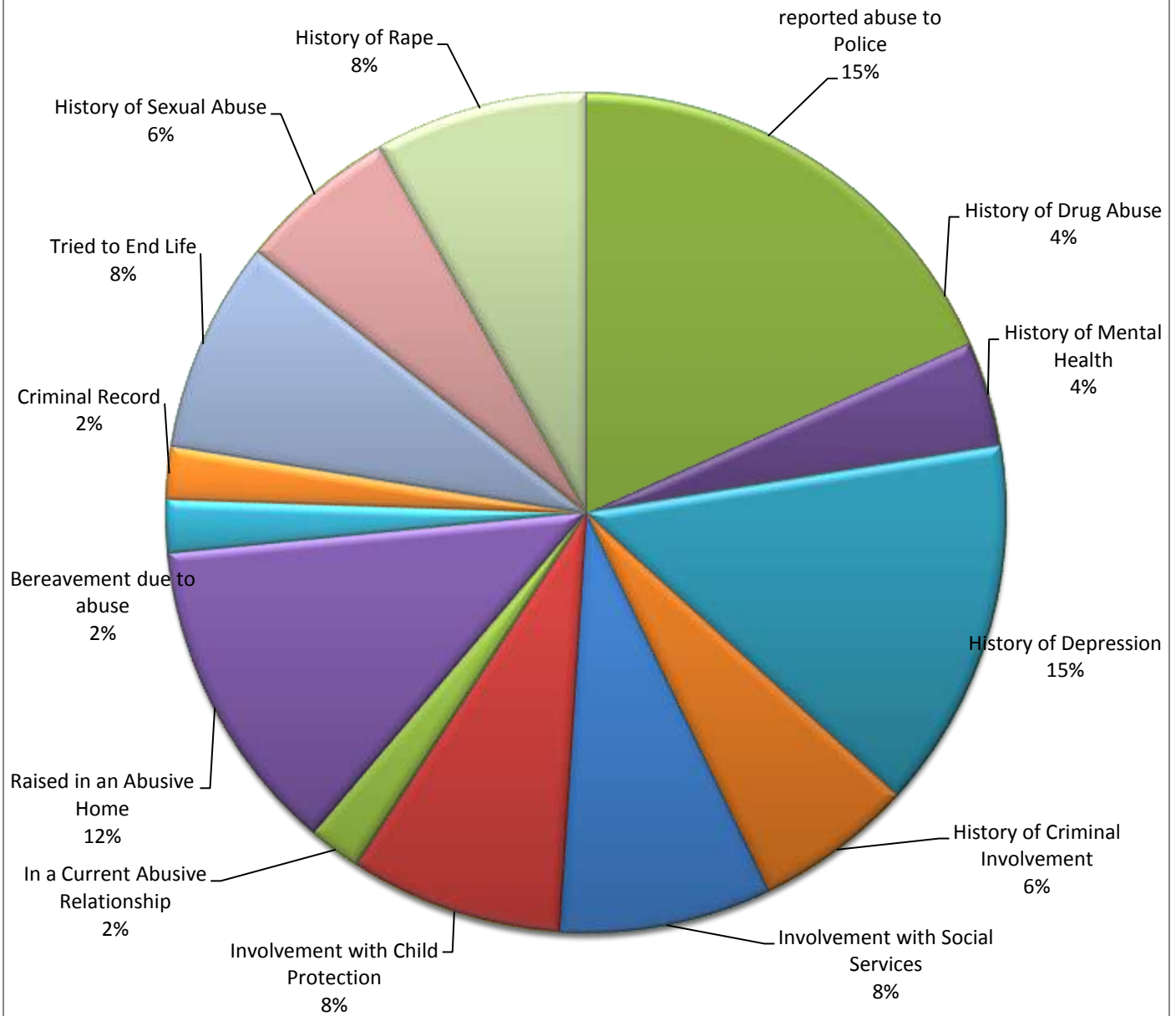
CURRENTLY WORKING



RELIGIOUS BELIEF



HISTORY AND EFFECTS OF ABUSE



HISTORIES OF WOMEN AND EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE- SEXUAL ABUSE AND RAPE WERE DISCLOSED THROUGHOUT THE 12 WEEK PROGRAMME. THIS INFORMATION IS TOO SENSITIVE TO DISCLOSE ON A FORM ON SESSION 1.

- 15% Reported to the Police
- 2% Criminal record
- 6% Criminal Involvement
- 2% In current abusive relationship
- 4% History of drug abuse
- 0% History of alcohol abuse
- 4% History of mental health
- 12% Raised in an abusive home
- 8% Involvement with Social Services
- 8% Involvement with Child Protection
- 2% Suffered a bereavement due to abuse
- 15% History of depression

- 6% History of sexual abuse
- 8 % History of rape
- 8% Tried to end their life

END OF REPORT

'Freedom Together' would like to say a special THANK YOU to the Croydon Central Collaboration of Children Centres for the funding 'Freedom Together' and for providing safe venues and excellent crèche facilities to all the families attending the programme, and lastly to all the local agencies for your endless belief, time and support towards helping END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

Freedom Together

Together we can make a difference!

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